



Issue Number: 2004-01

Mission:

To promote food safety through the consistent application of the Washington State Food Code

Purpose:

The FSRC will work in partnership with the Department of Health in developing advisory technical interpretations of the state food service regulations and other matters relating to WAC 246-215.

Council Representation:

- 1 Schools and Institutions
- 1 Small Grocery
- 1 Large Grocery
- 1 Small Restaurant
- 1 Large Restaurant
- 1 At-Large
- 1 Consumer and Academia
- 1 Food and Drug Administration
- 2 Eastside Local Health Jurisdictions
- 2 Westside Local Health Jurisdictions
- 1 Department of Health

Food Safety Review Council

Interpretation/Recommendation

to be forwarded to DOH

Hard-Crusted Breads--Definition of Protection from Contamination

Food Code Reference:

3-306.11
3-306.13
WAC 246-215-030
WAC 246-215-170

Date Approved:

July 15, 2004

Description of Issue/Concern:

Due to possible enforcement inconsistencies and customer requests for full enclosure packaging of all hard-crusted bread items, clarification of the protection required for hard-crusted bread items such as baguettes and French-style breads is needed.

Background and Public Health Significance:

State code requires that food service establishment owners protect food from potential or actual sources of contamination during transport, storage, preparation, cooking, display, and service by providing protection through effective measures. Most packaged, ready-to-eat foods are in sealed containers or wrappers that protect the food until opened by the consumer.

Unlike other packaged, ready-to-eat foods, hard-crusted breads are often loosely or minimally wrapped to appeal to consumers and allow the desired transfer of air and moisture to maintain the bread's character. When it does not entirely cover the loaf, the packaging may not protect against contamination from handling and the environment, especially when displayed for customer self-service. If the packaging is required to be sealed, an adequate exchange of air and moisture may result in an unsatisfactory product.

Interpretation/Recommendation:

Require that hard-crusted breads be protected by a full-coverage wrapping. Wrappings may be open on one end as long as the packaging fully covers the loaf. Containers for display of hard-crusted breads must have access points no lower than thirty inches above the floor.

Consider the interpretation format prepared by the State of California Department of Health Services: "Food Safety Notice, Packaging of Hard-Crusted Loaves and Rolls."

Application of Interpretation/Limitations:

Notice should be sent to all Local Health Jurisdictions, wholesalers and producers throughout the state.